

Message Text

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BRUSSELS AND LONDON FOR EEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PLOS, IT, GR
SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF GREEK-ITALIAN IONIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF
AGREEMENT

REF: A. 77 ATHENS 4991 (NOTAL) B. 77 ATHENS 1096 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER SHARP DEBATE, THE GREEK PARLIAMENT RATIFIED BY VOICE
VOTE THE AGREEMENT SIGNED DURING THE MAY 1977 VISIT OF ITALIAN
PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI TO GREECE (REF B) WHICH DELIMITS THE
CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE AREA OF THE SOUTHERN IONIAN SEA
BETWEEN GREECE AND ITALY. IN ARGUING FOR RATIFICATION, GOG
SPOKESMAN UNDERLINED

-- THAT THE AGREEMENT SET A PRECEDENT AND INDICATED
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GREECE'S WILLINGNESS TO SOLVE DISPUTES WITH ITS
NEIGHBORS THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS;

-- THAT ITS TERMS ACCORDED WITH THE GREEK POSITION FAVORING
DELIMITATION THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF USING THE MEDIAN LINE;

-- THAT IT TACITLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ISLANDS HAVE CONTINENTAL

SHELVES;

-- THAT THE AGREEMENT IN ESSENCE EMBODIED THE PRINCIPLES OF THE 1958 GENEVA CONVENTION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, A KEY FACTOR IN GREECE'S POSITION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE, AND PROVED THEY ARE ACCEPTED BY NON-SIGNATOR STATES (ITALY DID NOT SIGN THE 1958 CONVENTION).

2. STRONG OPPOSITION WAS SOUNDED BY SEVERAL PASOK DEPUTIES. THEY AGREED THAT THE AGREEMENT CONSTITUTED A PRECEDENT, BUT WARNED THAT ITS PROVISIONS WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO GREECE IN FUTURE DEALINGS WITH TURKEY OVER THE AEGEAN. THE PASOK DEPUTIES CONTENDED THAT THE AGREEMENT CONTAINED NO DIRECT TIE TO THE GENEVA CONVENTION. THEY STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NEITHER AN EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT ISLANDS HAVE THEIR OWN CONTINENTAL SHELVES NOR WAS THERE A PROVISION FOR PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST AN OFFENDING PARTY WHICH BROKE THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT. THEY ALSO ARGUED THAT THE MEDIAN LINE HAD NOT BEEN STRICTLY APPLIED.

3. EDA'S ELIAS ILIOU SPOKE ALONG THE SAME GENERAL LINES AS PASOK AND JOINED IN VOTING AGAINST RATIFICATION. THE ORTHODOX COMMUNIST PARTY ABSTAINED, CLAIMING IT, TOO, HAD RESERVATIONS. THE UDC'S JOHN ZIGHDIS PROCLAIMED THAT THE IONIAN SEA HELD GREAT PROMISE FOR PETROLEUM EXPLOITATION COMPARED TO THE AEGEAN, AND HIS PARTY VOTED FOR RATIFICATION, AS DID THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHTIST NATIONAL CAMP PARTY.

4. AS MENTIONED IN OUR EARLIER REPORTING ON THE GREEK-ITALIAN AGREEMENT, THE GREEKS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CITE IT TO BOLSTER THEIR LEGAL POSITION REGARDING THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH TURKEY OVER THE AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THE EQUIDISTANT RULE WAS NOT APPLIED ABSOLUTELY IN DEMARCATING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN GREECE AND ITALY, AND GREECE GAVE UP ITS CLAIM TO SOME OF THE AREA. HOWEVER, GOG OFFICIALS ARGUE THAT THIS FACT SIMPLY REINFORCES WHAT THEY BEEN MAINTAINING ALL ALONG -- THAT GREECE IS WILLING TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN PURSUIT OF PEACEFUL AND REASONABLE SOLUTIONS TO ITS DISAGREEMENTS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.
MCCLOSKEY

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